

See Your Risks More Clearly and Change the face of Cervical Cancer

Pap Test Awareness Week Oct 19-25



The Cervical Screening Initiatives program will be celebrating Pap test awareness week from October 19-25. This campaign promises to be an exciting one with a variety of new resources and strategies to raise awareness on the benefits of Pap testing, while encouraging more women to attend screening.

This week will launch a major initiative focusing on secondary and post secondary students in the province. The program is eager to partner with the education system to increase the knowledge base of upper age female students on the importance of Pap testing and the factors that increase the risk of developing cervix cancer. The goal of this strategy is to give young women the information they need to make informed decisions and to begin incorporating Pap testing as a healthy life style practice at an early age. What better way to reach the majority of young women in Newfoundland and Labrador, then through the school system.

The past year has seen tremendous success with the offering of access to service grants by the program. Many service providers in the province availed of this funding to enhance their existing screening practice or utilized monies to try something more innovative to reach unscreened and under screened women in their communities. Anyone wishing information on past projects, ongoing or new initiatives can contact the provincial cervical screening initiatives office.

To be successful in our goal to eradicate cervical cancer the program must work together with all partners in the province. During our fall campaign physicians in the province will receive a packet of promotional materials. These materials are intended to promote the importance of Pap testing and to aid as a prompt for both patient and physician. There are many ways to spread the message of Pap testing but studies show the most successful recruitment strategy for getting a women in for screening is the 'physician prompt.' During the upcoming Fall and winter the program will be discussing the opportunity of piloting different strategies to recruit women who are 3+ years since last screen. We will need physician participation and input to implement this pilot, which will attempt to isolate the most efficient ways to reach these under screened women.

Lori Harnett, provincial health educator with the Cervical Screening Initiatives Program, said she is very excited that the program has expanded to all regions of the province, this will help us work more closely with our partners in each region as screening rates in each of the regions are very low. "The program will partner with health care providers and community partners to assist us in raising awareness on the importance of regular Pap testing and to increase opportunities for women to access screening, said Harnett.

These strategies fit nicely with the theme for this years campaign, "see your risks more clearly and help us change the face of cervical cancer"!!